

What is claimed is:

1. A telecommunications network for providing multicast services to mobile users, said network comprising:
  - at least one media server for providing content;
  - a virtual network of backbone proxies that communicate with said media server and acting as a gateway between said media server and said mobile users; and
  - local proxies that communicate with said backbone proxies and act as a gateway between said mobile users and said backbone proxies.
2. A telecommunications network according to claim 1, wherein said backbone proxies communicate between each other by means of a tunneling technique.
3. A telecommunications network according to claim 2, wherein said tunneling technique is automatic multicast tunneling.
4. A telecommunications network according to claim 2, wherein said tunneling technique is UDP multicast tunneling protocol.
5. A telecommunications network according to claim 1, wherein said backbone proxies intercept multicast packets sent by said media server and forwards said packets along a multicast route in said virtual network.
6. A telecommunications network according to claim 5, wherein said multicast route is pre-configured.
7. A telecommunications network according to claim 1, wherein said local proxies advertise multicast services to said mobile users.

8. A telecommunications network according to claim 1, wherein said local proxies intercept service requests from said mobile users and route said requests to said media servers through said virtual network.
9. A telecommunications network according to claim 1, wherein said access network is not multicast-enabled and said local proxies provide multicast information to said mobile users using a tunneling technique.
10. A telecommunications network according to claim 1, wherein said network utilizes IP multicast when available.
11. A telecommunications network according to claim 1, wherein a multicast group is identified by both a source IP address provided by said media server and an IP multicast address assigned by said backbone proxies.
12. A telecommunications network according to claim 1, wherein said media server provides location-specific information and the mobile users geographical location is determined by GPS technology.
13. A method for a mobile user to join a multicast group, said method comprising:  
establishing a telecommunications network for providing multicast services to mobile users comprising at least one media server for providing content, a virtual network of backbone proxies that communicate with said media server and acting as a gateway between said media server and said mobile user, and local proxies that communicate with said backbone proxies and act as a gateway between said mobile user and said backbone proxies, said method comprising:  
said local proxies advertising said content provided by said media server;  
said mobile user sending a request for said content;  
said local proxies receiving said request and forwarding said request to said media server through said virtual network;

said media server sending said content to said local proxies through said virtual network; and  
said local proxies sending said content to said mobile users.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein said local proxies use a tunneling technique to  
send said content to said mobile users.